

VZCZCXRO5906
PP RUEHAG RUEHROV
DE RUEHTC #0936 3121531
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 071531Z NOV 08
FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2203
INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 000936

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/06/2018

TAGS: [ENRG](#) [PREL](#) [NL](#)

SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS: INITIAL REACTION TO THE PRESIDENT'S
ENERGY SECURITY LETTER

Classified By: DCM Michael Gallagher, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Post's key Dutch government contacts on energy informally tell us they agree on the importance of all the points raised in President Bush's letter to Prime Minister Balkenende: securing Caspian gas supply to Europe via non-Russian controlled routes; enforcing and strengthening EU competition laws in the energy sector; and improving energy interconnections between EU members. The Dutch are preparing a written response. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) Post passed President Bush's Eurasian energy security letter to Prime Minister Balkenende on October 23. Subsequently, Econoff shared a copy of the letter with Jan-Meinte Postma, Energy Envoy of the Minister of Economy, and Femke Hoogeveen, Senior Policy Advisor for Energy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Postma travels frequently to Central Asia, North Africa, and the Middle East to promote Dutch bilateral energy interests and prepare for Economic Affairs Minister Maria van der Hoeven's visits to the region. (Note: Postma had recently returned from Algeria, where he was preparing for Van der Hoeven's early 2009 trip there. The Dutch hope to sign a supply contract for LNG at that time. End note.)

¶3. (C) Postma agreed with all the points in the letter and assured Econoff the Dutch are on board and trying to engage on these issues. He said he would follow up with Van der Hoeven regarding concrete next steps Dutch can undertake to provide further support. (Note: MEA has lead responsibility for energy issues in the Dutch government. End note.) He said supply concerns in Central Asia do not revolve around the amount of natural gas reserves or how to lift the gas out of ground, but rather the "evacuability" of the gas -- the ability to transport it out of Central Asia. He cautioned that some countries along the southern corridor gas route are suffering from crisis fatigue, as Nabucco always seems to be at "critical juncture."

¶4. (C) Postma took the opportunity to reiterate Dutch dismay at the September editorial written by the U.S. Ambassador to Sweden raising objections to the Nordstream pipeline. Postma called the editorial "irresponsible, unhelpful, and incorrect." Postma maintained that Nordstream will bring new gas to Europe -- not redirect existing supplies -- to satisfy a big portion of inevitable European demand increases. (Note: Gas transport company Gasunie, 100% owned by the Dutch government, has a 9% stake in Nordstream. End note.)

¶5. (C) Hoogeveen also found nothing controversial, from the Dutch government's point of view, in the letter. She said the Foreign Ministry is coordinating a written response. She said there was not so much the Dutch could do directly to assuage Turkish energy supply concerns, although they do have some bilateral working-level technical cooperation.

CULBERTSON